

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing periodic status updates from a printer to a host system, comprising:
automatically sending printer status information from the printer to the host system at periodic time intervals.
2. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:
the periodic time intervals each comprise a constant time interval of between 5 seconds and 10 milliseconds.
3. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:
the periodic time interval is configurable.
4. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:
the status information comprises at least one of paper status, ink status, paper low, paper out, paper jam, ticket in path, top of form, barcode complete, validation field complete, field printed, and percentage of printing completed.
5. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
configuring at least one of the time interval and the status information via the host system.
6. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
storing at least one of the time interval and the status information in non-volatile memory of the printer.
7. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:
at least one of the time interval and the status information is provided from a removable memory device insertable into the printer.

8. A method in accordance with claim 7, wherein:

the removable memory device comprises one of a compact flash card, a smart card, a smart media card, a USB flash drive, a memory stick, or a plug in serial EEPROM.

9. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:

detecting an activity level at the printer;

decreasing the periodic time interval when the activity level increases; and

increasing the periodic time interval when the activity level decreases.

10. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

the host system comprises one of a cash register, a point of sale terminal, a slot machine, a gaming terminal, a lottery ticket machine, a transportation ticket vending machine, or an entertainment ticket vending machine.

11. A printer capable of providing periodic status updates to a host system, comprising:

means for generating printer status information; and

means for automatically sending the printer status information to the host system at periodic time intervals.

12. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

the periodic time intervals each comprise a constant time interval of between 5 seconds and 10 milliseconds.

13. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

the periodic time interval is configurable.

14. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

the status information comprises at least one of paper status, ink status, paper low, paper out, paper jam, ticket in path, top of form, barcode complete, validation field complete, field printed, and percentage of printing completed.

15. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

at least one of the time interval and the status information is configured via the host system.

16. A printer in accordance with claim 11, further comprising:

non-volatile memory for storing at least one of the time interval and the status information at the printer.

17. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

at least one of the time interval or the status information is provided from a removable memory device insertable into the printer.

18. A printer in accordance with claim 17, wherein:

the removable memory device comprises one of a compact flash card, a smart card, a smart media card, a USB flash drive, a memory stick, or a plug in serial EEPROM.

19. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

the means for generating the printer status information detects an activity level at the printer, and (1) decreases the periodic time interval when the activity level increases; or (2) increases the periodic time interval when the activity level decreases.

20. A printer in accordance with claim 11, wherein:

the host system comprises one of a cash register, a point of sale terminal, a slot machine, a gaming terminal, a lottery ticket machine, a transportation ticket vending machine, or an entertainment ticket vending machine.